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778 In the village of Kangaba a sanctuary, called mande blo "vestibule of Mande," or kaba blo "vestibule of astonishment," is the object of a septennial ritual attended by representatives of all the races /who are/ said to be of the same origin. There ceremony consists in rebuilding the roof of the sanctuary which shelters an object dolin, but only those persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family (1) and the

551 1. The name of Kéita, for which various etymologies have been found, is that of the founders of the Mandingo empire. Cf. C. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali, p. 31, and L. Tauxier, Histoire des Bambara /Bambara History/, p. 40: "The first kings of Mali lived at Kangaba and were in fact Kéita."

By extension the name of Kéita may be adopted by individuals belonging to one of the tribes originating in Mandé. Thus a Dogon will take on as dyamu Kéita if he comes to live in Mandé. On the other hand, the heraldic device of the Kéita, which relates the high deeds of the Mandingo princes, includes the devices of almost all the tribes said to be of the same origin. This common origin may perhaps throw some light on the institution of regularized name changes observed in Black Africa, a problem which has claimed the attention of some authors; see in particular P. Humblot, Du nom et des appellations chez les Malinke /Names and nomenclature among the Maunke/.

traditional griot of the chiefs of Mandé, the Dyabaté, are authorized to perform the ritual. Only they may penetrate the sanctuary and tread on its soil, which is said to be "heavier and more powerful than all things." (2)

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346 2. Kangaba dugukolo ka gri fɛ̃w be.
The sanctuary is a round hut provided with two doors, one oriented to the east and the

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346 other to the west, and covered with a thatched roof in which is hidden an object called dolin. The village is surrounded by several sacred places: a sunzun tree to the north; a well to the west; two stones, one (fara fi) situated near the village and the other (fara gwe) on the river's edge.

796 The septennial ceremony is performed at night. Toward evening, the eldest of the Kéita goes secretly to remove the object dolin from the old thatch and hides it. The new roof is made with materials gathered by the descendants of Farako Makan Kegni (straw, bamboo, and fibers) while the women of the same relationship plaster the walls. The Dyabaté griot who will officiate provide themselves with a little stick of sunzun wood about the length of the ring finger with which they will rub their teeth; the twigs must be cut by the elder sister of the chief of the griot who gives her in exchange /xv/ a loin-cloth of eight [801] bands of white cotton and a number of cowries in multiples of 8 such as 8, 480.

The orators who will officiate during the night wear a white cap topped by a band of cotton of the same color and a yellow tunic (wolo) (see p. 20 ). Sitting inside the hut from which the old roof has been removed, facing east, they spit into a receptacle in order not to soil the ground. The Kéita remain outside the hut on a site marked by stones and covered with gravel collected in the river bed by young men. During the entire night, the griot, each in turn and encouraged by a relative, recite from the devices of all the tribes issued from Mandé. At dawn, they sing as they circle the construction; then the Kéita hoist up the new roof. Next, the elder

196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief

1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well [197] organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2)

[556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

197 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages 212 of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

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points them out successively with his finger, saying: "cross the pond" (ko tike sumangolo), "cross the river" (ba tike sumangolo), "Soumangolo's descent is over" (sumangolo yigi bana). The partner removes the pebble immediately adjacent to the branch pointed to and asks: "Is this it?" (nin wa?). The player must answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." The game is again taken up in the same way at the starting point. When the onlooker places his finger on the now empty space, he asks: "Is this it?". The player must answer: "No! Soumangolo." The second pebble is removed and, to the same question, the player must then answer: "Yes! Soumangolo." Then follows the same chant, the same mimicry to get at the third pebble, which is also removed. The game is started over again in the same way, at the same starting point, and the second branch of the cross is reached. This continues until the four groups of pebbles placed in the angles are eliminated. The player who has answered without making a mistake is the winner; supposedly he has victoriously crossed "the twelve future waters."

The immediate effect of this game is to place the winner in a favorable position: his earnings increase; his enterprises succeed. But this is not all: it represents a cosmogonic operation of a high order. In the old days, sumangolo was [789] played to bring about rain in times of drought; every person playing it today contributes to the actual functioning of the universe as well as to the realization of future times awaited by men. In certain villages the ancestor Soumangolo is [796] celebrated yearly by a hearty feast at which millet beer is drunk and all day long the villagers play the game bearing his name.

The sumangolo is part of a series of figures, sometimes geometrical, which serve as the base for cosmogonic games of semi-ritual character such as the one described above.

812 561 man's life passes through seven successive ages corresponding to the seven skies, the seven earths, the seven waters, and the seven stages of millet growth. The seven ages are: bilakoro, "an uncircumcised person"; kemẽkoro "a circumcised person of the last age grade"; tyebalẽ, literally, a big man; masẽlẽ, literally, a successful person; makoroba, literally, an elderly person; madeselẽ, literally, a person who cannot succeed, an old man; mabalẽ, an impotent old man.

812 561 796 These bonds are also confirmed annually for everybody in the course of the ritual called "the renewal of the year." By renewing the cardinal points, the Bambara add to the strength of these poles of attraction which are responsible for maintaining things within themselves and with respect to each other. At the same time they proceed to a "revival of the body and soul," including all from the youngest to the oldest. For the year to come, they take a fresh breath, a new life, and submit the body to internal and external purifications, making it adequate to fulfill its role.

## Effects of Death on the Person

761 The first effect of death is to dissociate the elements that make up the person. The religious practices, imbued with respect for these elements, aim at organizing their preservation in order that they may not be lost to the deceased, to society, and finally, to Faro who controls life and assures the survival of souls.

The dya remains in the water where it will be kept until the birth of a child. But the ni, which escapes from the body with the last breath, is watched for by the head of the family who catches it and carries it to an altar. As we have seen above, it will return to animate the dya of the child who will inherit the deceased's spiritual principles, leaving behind it on the altar, a kind of exuvia, mana or folo, as a sign of the deceased's sojourn on earth.

The tere becomes transformed at death; liberated from the body, it becomes nyama which escapes and which may sometimes attack the living. Proof of this is the fear aroused by the sight of a corpse. /73/ It would seem that the tere's combination of strength and character is expressed by the activity of the nyama; but it is really dangerous only in the case of violent death (the murder of a man or an animal). In this case the nyama attacks the responsible party. If death is natural, the nyama, like the ni, is directed by the relatives and placed on the family altar (pembele) in the course of the

326 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a
778 sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it,
796 overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakum, on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the [534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dɛ̃) with a lump of 533] (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the

1. Kli dɛ̃, "son of the testicle," is one [522] of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protect-
778 ing the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific.
842 Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

323 An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
796 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

323 The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
344 male twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand. The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound, walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

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often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars.

These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

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Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

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religious and social powers in ancient societies, it is interesting to point out that the Komo altars represent a very definite three-way division: the first is used for the conservation of spiritual forces (souls) of the group; the second presides exclusively over agricultural rites; the third is concerned with keeping the spiritual principles of individuals who died violently and of crop seeds; it played an important role during the wars. This threefold division is comparable on many points to that observed by M. Dumezil in Indo-European societies.

from the first crops /149/ used as offerings, are placed next to the sanctuaries or in the home of the chief (1).

1. In the village of Soroba the sanctuary includes seven granaries: three for small millet, sanɔ̃; four for large millet, keninge. Seven is the number symbolic of the person, three for masculinity (small millet is male) and four for femininity (large millet is female).

C. The Mask

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The man who wears the mask during the ceremonies personifies the Komo. The head is sculptured in the shape of a human face or animal face. At Konodimini, it represents the panther; at Soungoba, a stork; at Banankoroni, an eagle; at Banoumbougoula, an elephant; at Ségoubougou, a vulture. The mask is usually decorated with elements borrowed from several animals. Thus, at Soroba, the skull and horns are those of a buffalo, but the jaw is that of a crocodile. It is, moreover, ornamented with the feathers of a wild duck (2).

2. An informant, who attended Komo ceremonies in a great number of villages, asserted he had never seen the same mask twice.

794 534 on half-gourds, and accompanied by flutes and bells. The musicians, recruited from among the musical members of the society, are obliged to submit to certain precautions because of the proximity of the mask during the performance of the dances. In fact, if the mask casts a spell (korti), they may, unwittingly, breathe in the dangerous powder and it is wise to protect oneself by taking the antidote ahead of time.

794 534 The Komo's iron bell, kolokolo or grinda, is kept with certain altars in the chief's residence; it is rung by a special bearer, grindavo or nadara koloyo.

713 539 A myth recalls the origin of this bell. "A small child, who went to play at the crossroads situated at the approaches to the village, heard one day a bell ring and invisible beings speak. Seized with fear, he returned home. When he was questioned by his parents, he refused to answer but with his finger pointed out to them the road which he took every day. The parents followed it and arrived at the crossroads where they found a copper bell. The spirit of the place, Soba, announced to them that he was making a gift of it so that they might call the spirits by ringing it and that the spirits would answer them (1). But he asked the father to give him in exchange the child

1. In olden times, "men spoke with their ancestors and with their gods."

who habitually came to the crossroads so that the child could continue to play with the spirit's children. When the father, in despair, told him he had not the courage to part with his son, the spirit advised him to consult Faro.

The man gathered the young girls of the village together and asked them to intercede for him with the spirit. Dressed in their most beautiful clothes and wearing their ornaments, they went off singing and threw cakes and couscous into the river (2). The elders

[796] 2. Each year the offering and the race are repeated by the young girls of Ségou who go to the river singing the nyari nyari to.

went down in turn and received Faro's consent. He demanded that

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and
869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.
20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small
532 mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

794 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several
796 times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to
[574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

194 196 The ceremony begins with a council meeting which is attended by all the members and which takes place in an enclosure, kara so. Early in the morning, the Komo chief, aided by two men of his age grade, draws upon the ground the figures which indicate the places of the participants and of the material objects (1).

1. See Fig. 12.

When the members arrive, they immediately place themselves, without risking disorder, near the sign proper to the group to which they belong. Each one, in passing, greets the person who will perform the sacrifice. The inhabitants of the neighboring villages are received by a member in a spot somewhat removed. They state the group to which they belong or draw their sign on the ground without saying a word. The chief acclaims their arrival with these words: "The strangers have come; the strangers, sons of the Komo have come; their place is in their hand; let tolerance be granted them" (2). The

2. Dnow nana, komo dɛ̃ dnow nana,
u siki yoro be u bolo, yafa ka kɛ u ma.

council meeting is then opened.

The chief sits down in the central square, facing the west, places the boli to his right, listens to the propositions of the members, all of whom similarly face west. If he rises, all conversation ceases; it resumes only when he is again seated. If a member wishes to move during the meeting, he must ask the permission of the chief of the Komo. The latter goes to place his hand near the sign as an excuse for the man. When the member returns, the chief of his group takes a little water with which to pour over the drawing as a purification (3).

3. The temporary absence of a member is called: wuli ka bo komo ko la, "to rise and leave the affair of the Komo" and the return do dye ba la komo jine sabu la, "to enter into the great union of the spirit of the Komo."

When all questions concerning the society or the village have been examined and discussed, and when the decisions have been reached, everyone stands up; the drawings on the ground are erased with water.

794 The rituals in which the mask participates generally /161/ take
796 place the following night in a thicket called komo tu, "bushy one of
201 the Komo," situated in the bush near the village.

As soon as they hear the mask whistling, the members approach according to their age grades, the older ones first. In principle, only those under the jurisdiction of the functioning Komo and their guests are present. However, any initiated stranger who wishes to attend the dances makes his status known by means of the following signs:

1. Shouting "hé" or "ho," he presents his right hand to the mask with all the fingers folded except the index and the little finger which point towards it. The index, in this case, represents the circumcised man, member of the Komo society, in sum, the petitioner. The little finger, which is smaller, expresses this man's submission to the Komo and the fact that he is and will always remain its inferior.

2. He puts a twig of straw in his mouth; the light colored straw signifies that his heart is pure, that he has no evil intention. The mouth, closed over the straw, shows that the man, "understanding the word of the Komo," has no need to speak of it.

3. On his arrival, he says: ani bara (literally, I am with the bara). The masker, hearing these words, crouches and then straightens up suddenly before the newcomer as though to frighten him. The latter then says: "I am a new child of the society" (1). When he is accepted,

1. Ne ye timidɛ̃ kura ye.

the masker resumes the dance and the ceremony continues.

794 The rhythms of the Komo bear the general name of komo bara or
796 komo foli dunu (literally, rhythm of the Komo drums) (2). They are
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2. The word bara is reserved for the rhythms of the masked Komo dances. The rhythms of the profane dances of the elders are called mabere fo, those of the young men, bɔ̃dyala, those of the girls, kofili.

numerous, adapted to the rituals they accompany, each endowed with a separate name. The Bambara classify them into three categories: the rapid, violent, and difficult rhythms performed against the non-initiates; the soft rhythms for circumcision; the sad rhythms for funerals.

194 During the masked dances, once the drummers have begun the
196 rhythm of the Komo, they must neither slow down nor cease their
533 playing; otherwise the masker will rush at the player and threaten him with his left hook. In this case, the musician changes the rhythm in order to soothe the masker and sings: "You, old men, you are with the bara; listen, this bara is not empty." (1).

1. Aw ni bara makorabaw; klo madyo,
nin bara te bara lãkulo ye.

194 /162/ The masker participates in the ceremony not only by dancing
196 and by uttering cries, whose pitch and intensity vary according to
198 the action which he is preparing or performing.

A guttural and very muffled cry (buâ, buâ, buâ) called komo suruku (literally, hyena of the Komo) is used to frighten the participants.

A shrill and short cry (pyɛ̂, pyɛ̂, pyɛ̂) called kono fari kasi (literally, cry of the bad bird) is frequently used to animate the dance and amuse the spectators.

A long and softer cry (ô-ô, ô, ô, the last three ô's being very close together) called morokorobaw kasi (literally, cry of the ancestors) greets the chief and his age grade.

194 During the mask dance, the Komo's griot encourages it by reciting
196 the devices which exalt its power, authority, and judicial powers:
"You, Komo, you griot of the Komo, you, ringer of the bell, from whom do you come? You come from Makanta Djigui. You, bad Komo, from whom do you come? You come from Soma Moriba. To whom did this one give it? He gave it to the sons of the blacksmiths. Who are the owners of the Komo? Makanta Djigui, Soma Moriba, the sons of the blacksmiths. These have not known shame; you must not be ashamed. These have not received humiliations; you must not be humiliated.

"You, little living Komo, enemy of non-members, friend of members, take your enemy's heart, take his liver. I follow behind you and not before you. Ah! Komo; you, killer of the fat dead ones, shroud of those living, act upon him who provokes you as you do upon him who does not provoke you" (2).

2. E komo, e dyeli, e ndara kolo fo,
e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora makanta

794 796 jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di numu dew ma dyenuye komo tigiw ye, makanta jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo, aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.

E komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu, birilew nyima i dyugu son ta i la ka bye ta mbi ko nti nye.

E komo, i su klo la faba, nyenemaw kasange, minya kila a ko la, mi ma kila a ko la.

When the drums beat and the dances are animated, and when the masker cries, it is said that "the bara of the komo is hot" (komo bara wusule do). The ceremony is in full swing.

Diverse incidents may occur in the course of the masked dances which give rise to interpretations and interventions by the members.

794 796 787 When one of the arrows attached to the mask trembles, it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the assembly. The elders remove the arrow and immediately order /163/ the ceremony to stop. After the drums have been silenced, they request the culprit to present himself, which he immediately does. These words are spoken to him: "Your arrow attacks you" (1). He then offers a ram and beer in sacrifice,

1. Komo bye bila.

while the arrow is replaced and the dances resume. If an arrow falls in the course of the dance it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the village.

794 796 If a part of the costume falls off, it is picked up by three members and kept to be burned with the refuse that is later swept up (2).

2. See p. 259.

794 796 688 If one of the participants has broken the taboo and revealed the secrets of the Komo during the past year, the masker whistles, asks the drummers to stop playing, and says: "Here is a grasshopper for me." These words express the contempt in which he holds the culprit. Next he adds: "There is the smell of a corpse here" (3).

794 3. Su kasa be.
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688 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
766 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas. The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
796 the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
688 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
782 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who, in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/ in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini,
ne ma na m fa sia tuku ko la.

194 girls who provide water and are present during the work sing to encourage the best workers or to insult the lazy ones.

Once their task is done, they partake on the spot of dishes /174/ especially prepared for them. As they leave they make their instruments roar and resound. By these means, the force (wanzo) which they have spent in working is "recaptured in the wind" by the twirling of the rhombos and returned to the ndomo, that is, recovered by themselves. For if their wanzo has permitted a useful effort, it has penetrated into the fields, thus diminishing by so much the store of the ndomo. On the other hand, this power, which is useful for cultivation, is harmful to germination. To leave it in the earth would injure the harvests. And this is why, as an extra precaution, the owner burns a gray lizard in his plot the following day in order to rid it completely of this evil accretion.

194 During the dry season, ceremonies to bring out the mask are performed for the purpose of soliciting gifts from the inhabitants of the
196 village. The members stand in a circle before each door while the masker dances the ndomo do, the dance of the ndomo. The chief designates two young men who, placed in the center, each receive three whip lashings from their comrades. Then, the youngest strikes the masker who dances again, hitting in his turn with his long whip those who do not lower their heads correctly as a sign of respect.

If the owner who is being solicited turns a deaf ear, all sing to make fun of him and to force him to give:

"It is the custom, we are not hungry; it is the custom of the world, we are not hungry" (1).

1. Lada do, kongo tawna, dyɛ̃ lada do kongo tawna.

When all the houses have been visited, the children line up to return and, at the chief's order, walk towards a crossroad, which is the seat of the protecting spirits of the ndomo. There they leave the mask and break their whips saying: "Crossroads, I entrust myself to you."

The gifts representing food or cowrie shells are divided up among the maskers and the three chiefs. The millet is kept for the day of the annual ceremony.

On following night, the masker goes to the crossroads and brings back to the chief the ritual objects which were temporarily left there.

364 778 782 (a) Household refuse, collected individually, is placed in separate piles inside shallow circular excavations dug out at the approaches to the villages (see Pl. VI, b). Among wealthy people a goat is sacrificed each week by having its throat cut above the pile on which the altar is temporarily placed. The sacrifice effects a double exchange: the blood nourishes the altar while at the same time it brings about the transfer into the altar of the forces contained in the refuse.

364 778 796 Every two months and seven days, at the decision of the village chief, these individual rubbish piles are removed from the holes. Each person burns his own pile and inhales the smoke. The ashes are deposited on the river bank, dampened so that the wind does not blow them away, and abandoned during seven days, a period during which Faro "comes to visit them and to bless them."

On the eighth day, after a meeting at the chief's residence, the villagers gather at the crossroads to burn the collective refuse piles, to collect the ashes, and to transport them, accompanied by the rhythm wanzo foli beaten on the drums, to the river bank where they will join those of the individual heaps.

After a sacrifice offered upon the konye altars of the participants, the griot of the Komo is struck by the nyama boli until he goes into a trance and flings himself into the water without saying a word. All must throw their ashes in after him before he comes out again. At that moment the spittles of the man who flutters about in the water are collected as a gift from Faro in exchange for the refuse which has been thrown in. Each person rubs his hands and feet with the saliva and upon returning, which is done in silence, impregnates the threshold of his home with it as evidence of the sacrifice so that Faro "might recognize his own and protect their life."

/203/ The following Thursday the people gather to dance according to the rhythms appropriate to each sex and generation. In the evening, each person places his foot on the site of the refuse heap; then all gather at the crossroads to offer the Soba spirit some millet, cotton, and kola nuts. The ceremony ends with a meeting at the chief's residence where he gives advice and encourages each one to respect tradition and to honor the ancestors and the protecting spirits.

(b) After the comings out of the Komo, the refuse is swept up and deposited in front of the sanctuary. Each participant leaps over the pile three times to communicate his nyama to it. In the evening the masker circles and whistles around the heap on which fire is lit while

364 778 796 the chief throws dust three times to the four cardinal points. The masker then stands in the wind in such a way as to receive the smoke; the chief and the members crouch in line behind him with their mouths open to inhale better. When the wind changes its direction they all move to continue this fumigation, wusuli, which constitutes a purification as well as an increment of forces. At the moment the fire is almost out, the most courageous of the participants stamps on it in order to assimilate better the nyama which it exudes. The ashes, [804] gathered by the chief, are distributed, the unit of measurement being the gourd mure. An important share goes to the nyama boli, another is given as an offering to Faro, and a third is distributed among the members.

Several days later, the group goes to the river bank to the sound of drums beating out the murumuruw foli (literally, rhythm of the refuse); they throw the ashes reserved for Faro into the water and, continuing to dance, return to the village.

364 778 252 Those ashes given to the members are used to prepare the potass which is mixed into the millet cake, the daily food of the Bambara, and which will make the members of the family share in the powers contained in the nyamanto.

364 778 The eating of this mixture closes the cycle of the transfer of forces, which were temporarily communicated to the refuse by the individuals, then recovered by Faro, and finally redistributed to the social body.

## III. Rain Rites

789 241 At the time the first work is done in the fields, a drawing is made with millet mash upon the tree of the Kworè in the shape of a lozenge inscribed within a rectangle, which represents "the great fire which issued /204/ from the cardinal angles" at the time of their creation. While this is being done, the following words are spoken: "The four elbows (the lozenge) are the fire of the angles; here is the anniversary of the Kworè." The clearing of the field or the first plowing always symbolizes the very first clearing obtained through fire.

789 796 794 During the month of May, the members of the Kworè society make sacrifices upon their altars before the first rumbling of thunder in order to purify the first sky where clouds are formed from the impure passage of Mousso Koroni. The chief gathers the members about the tree and recites the following prayer:

789 "I have come to you, Kworè, if (the cloud) is black in the east,
796 let it come; black in the west, let it come; black in the south, let it
794 come; black in the north, let it come; black above, let it come, and then let it give a great water" (1). He next pours on the ground the

1. Ne nani na kwore nani na; a ma fi korona a ka na; a ma fi klebi a ka na; a ma fi woro dugu a ka na; a ma fi keñeka a ka na; a ma fi sãfe a ka na; otumana a ka ke dyi ba ye.

millet mash and the blood of fowls brought by each member. The initiation of the new members takes place during this ceremony.

After the drinking of millet beer which follows the ceremonies, it is customary to tell the story of Mousso Koroni chased by Pemba and pursued by Faro.

If, in spite of this the rain does not come soon enough, the members gather at the foot of the tree and bring with them an iron axhead which is placed in fresh water. The water is next poured out at the foot of the tree; it symbolizes the cold which the spirits of the Kworè are subjected to in the second sky during their struggles to make the rain come through.

In certain villages the sacrifices to the Kworè and to Faro are offered at the same time. At Massala and Soroba, the members go to the shore of the Niger, carrying the kworè boli with them. The bit of water which it contains is poured into the river and replaced while a prayer is addressed to Faro. The throat of a victim is then cut and some copper is thrown into the river. The altar is shaken above the water to imitate the noise of thunder and rain. Upon their return to the village, the members light a fire at the foot of the Kworè tree and place thunder stones in its embers.

"Heating the stones shakes up their soul"; when they are hot, they are plunged into cold water "to warm and to agitate the soul of water." The smoke from the fire, as well as the heat absorbed by the stones and the water, force the rain to fall.

/205/ Victims are sacrificed and the members return to the village around which they circle six times, beginning at the west. Then they return the nimara boli to the sanctuary and the elders who represent the spirit dance about on one foot to the sound of drums

189 as an imitation of Faro who has only one lower limb. The altar, which
196 is placed in the sanctuary by the chief who enters it walking backwards,
194 receives as an offering a little water from the Niger in which thunder stones have been soaking since the night before to be "refreshed." The same libation is made on the kworè boli. After returning to the home of the chief of the Komo, libations of millet mash are poured upon the walls of his house; then, in the name of Faro, the nimara boli, and the Kworè, the throat of a white ram is cut; the flesh of the animal will be thrown into the river, at the conclusion of the ceremonies.

194 (c) At the end of the winter season the "anniversary of the Kworè"
196 is celebrated; its purpose is to commemorate the action of the spirits during the preceding season in order to obtain rain water.

On the fixed day, members of the society, wearing loincloth and carrying in their left hand a whip made of macerated and twisted grass, and in their other hand a torch of burning straw, gather near the tree around which they circle and sing to "gather up the Kworè." [185] The cracking of whip lashes which they give each other represents thunder claps; the beating of the drum which accompanies their songs imitates its rumbling. The burns which they inflict upon themselves recall those which the spirits endure in the celestial combats. They next direct their steps toward the public square where the villagers have gathered and where the spirit they have supposedly invoked by their mimicry is leading them. When all have gathered, the kworeduga, who represent the spirits mounted on their winged horses ready to fly into combat, appear dressed in their traditional costumes and riding their wooden horses.

They advance while dancing and singing verses which are then taken up by a chorus of the members. The latter having formed a [185] circle, the chief places himself in the center, whipping himself, burning himself, and pretending to swallow the fire of his torch. When he is weary he stops and the members take turns to imitate him. Powder made from ground pepper is blown into the dancers' eyes to recall the burning heat of the fiery heavens.

The kworeduga, who have by then put down their wooden horses, set their foot on the earth ready for the fight, after having seized some green tree branches. They put out the fire which has caught onto the clothing of the dancers and participants. This gesture recalls the action of the wind which, in space, put out the hot fire that

794 attacked /206/ the fighters. Between dances the participants drink beer
796 brought to the spot for the occasion in order to nourish the invisible beings which they represent.

[762] All the participants also eat a dish made up of peas, beans, groundnuts, rice, manioc, millet, fonio, cooked with baobab leaves and karite oil. This mixture is identified with the spirits' struggle with the clouds which they supposedly swallow at the height of the battle. When the ceremony draws to an end, the chief sends the women and children home and fetches the kwore boli which he swings eighteen times over the square.

In a file, the members of the society return to the tree to "bring back" the Kworè which, while invisible, has been present at all the ceremonies. They circle around the tree singing to the rhythm of the drums. Then they put out their torches and throw them at the foot of the tree along with the whips before returning to their homes.

[752] Their wounds and burns are cared for by their wives with water from the Kworè altar. this medication bearing the name of kworè kane (remedy of the Kworè).

The same dances and the comings out of the mask take place three days in succession. On the fourth day the chief and the elders, all undressed, crawl to the sanctuary for the annual sacrifice offered inside it. The chief gathers the thunder stones collected during the past year and places them in the sack containing the altars which are to be sold.

To "clarify" the mirrors, he pours millet mash over them; he cut the throat of fowls and places kola nut juice over the snake and the ñõ boli; he next fills the ñõ boli with millet previously taken from that of the Komo. With the remaining seeds he makes a mash with which to pour a libation over the sack. He next passes a burning twig of straw over the snake while saying:

"You, snake, you do not fear the fire; you must not fear fire and rain" (1).

1. E ngorongo e ma sira tasuma ne e kana sira sandyi tasuma fie.

The effect of this action is to prepare the snake by means of these burns and to attract lightning whose effects it must not fear.

## IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

796 783 These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions; the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from

1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul. " But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his ču̍eso the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog [825 782] is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength.

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro " a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior. " He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

796 783 all is returned to him. He then goes to the river or to the edge of Faro's pond, where he drinks a little water as a purification for the year to come.

2. On the day chosen for the family ceremony, the ngoni is solemnly removed from the room where it is usually kept hidden from view, and is presented to the family assembled before the door.

The rhythm called kalafoli is beaten out on the frame; the effect of this is to return the soul (ni) of the participants to the river or well. Then another rhythm, representing Faro, is played on the net to call in the renewed soul which has been returned by the spirit. Everyone opens his mouth and inhales the new, beneficial emanations coming over the family. When the rhythm ceases they all shut their mouths and return home without speaking. At the entrance door the children are given little strokes on the back with a little rope, sebe dyuru /208/ "to receive and withstand all that the new year will bring."

The instrument is then replaced in the home while all the participants shut their eyes in order not to see it. The owner goes into a trance, a fact which shows that Faro himself carried the instrument to the place where it will remain during the year. The man walks out backwards from the room where he has placed it and is carried into his česo, where he receives special care intended to return him to his normal state, which includes a purification performed on his individual altar, čuafebyěni (1).

1. See p. 175.

3. The collective ceremonies for the renewal of the person are first performed on the stone fara ba of the village.

The "signs of creation" (bolo ti doniya), engraved with a red-hot iron on a gourd as a request to the ancestors for their support, are presented to the participants. Next, the stone is removed and the objects covered by it are checked, the group thus assuring itself that none has been displaced during the year. Then they proceed to the 796 reconstruction of the ritual drawings. The operator first draws the 783 torches representing the fire used in olden times by the ancestors to 532 defend themselves against attacks and dangers from the outside while they were building the village. The following prayer is recited:

"You, torch of fire, I have prepared you in the mountain (from which our ancestors came), you who keep the souls of the village, protect us from those who wish us harm, fire" (ter) (2).

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2. E mõ ñõ tasuma, ñe e ɲu kulu la kẹ dla,
dugu nimara ba ke, i kã kla kelenyõ na,
tasuma (ter).

Then he draws, as on the ancestors' caps, a black dot which represents the womb of women as well as Faro. The latter will help men by giving them water, for without his help "none, not even the Kworè, have the rain necessary for agriculture.

Three small figures represent the three responsible chiefs of the Kworè who are subjected to the fire rites and who withstand with courage for the common welfare all the sufferings and burns. The other members are represented by four silhouettes to indicate their inferior position by a feminine number. The entire grouping of personages and torches converges on the black dot to show that "the men by their feet and the torches by their fire throw back their nyama toward him."

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[185]

When the drawings are finished, all the participants in turn place their little finger and then their tongue on them to abandon the nyama of the year and to receive new forces. The women use the same gestures as the men but repeat them four times. Each person then receives, respectively, three /209/ or four lashes of the whip on his back so as to integrate properly within him these new elements (3).

3. The little finger acts upon the nyama of the body, and the tongue upon the nyama of words.

The children, led by their mothers, are the objects of similar attentions. The boys press their toes upon the stone; the little girls present their genitals to it to prove their femininity. All are then seated in turn on the stone so that the old nyama leaves them through the anus. Then, they are lifted up above it by their parents and "are shaken in all directions to settle properly the newly received nyama in them." The mothers pass their hands over the fact of their children and then over their own, a gesture which binds them to their offspring for the year to come.

The assembly goes to the Kworè stone where the cardinal points are renewed by brandishing lighted torches to the west, north, south, and then east. Each person apologizes for the faults committed during

796 783 the year. The men in turn each place their right foot on the stone and turn in succession toward the cardinal points, inhaling deeply with open mouth and extended tongue as though "to breathe them in."

[785] The women do the same, but place their middle finger on the stone; at the same time they receive four whip lashes on the back so as to "sustain (1) the change of the cardinal points with pain."

1. The more familiar term, "to receive" would be a better translation.

With heads lowered and hands at their back, the sick persons would present to the stone those parts of their bodies which are the source of their sufferings, saying: "Here is the evil that is in my flesh" (2), for

2. Nka soko la ba na fle ninye.

the stone is both responsible for and a depository of illness. The one-eyed and blind show their closed eyes. The cripples place their affected limb upon it. Then the initiated elders, completely naked, encircle the stone while recting a formula in the ancient language (3).

3. Dede kumbeyde mala kay kapo kumbey de malado. This text would mean: "stone, mistress of all, fear nothing, your children are there."

Next, the young men run around it rapidly rotating their right arms with closed fists. By this gesture, they are asking the stone to help them find a wife. The young girls follow them, walking in their footsteps, a gesture of docility which also expresses their desire to marry.

The ceremony ends with beer drinking which lasts three days. Each person is happy and gay at having "renewed" his soul; the young people will marry and children will be conceived.

621 776 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 621 794 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement benefited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 794 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest, whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 796 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indicates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

782 796 778 During these general gatherings, from which no one is excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There, the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually follows.

In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the important men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploitation of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this

1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every
796 year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also

[258]

1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
782

857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells, in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

857 The admission of new members follows. Each of them
796 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie, swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

[535] At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

857 796 [572] companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and his relations with her are not merely platonic.

The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band returns to the village for a public performance during which the members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

857 796 785

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a

> 1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

793
794 covered by the cloak made of feathers from guinea fowl and
778 chickens. Beneath this garb, the wara-da performs all sorts of acrobatics. Skillfully manipulating the mask and the cloak during ritual dances, he gives the illusion, in the light of the fires, of a fantastic creature whose cries, transmitted through the horn, terrify even the initiated.

793 In addition to the wara-da, the clergy includes: a
794 Komo-tigi, high priest; some muru-kala-tigi, sacrificers; a da-ro-tigi, porter, who announces and prepares for the meetings; and a Komo-dyeli, herald. There are also student wara-da, called soma-den' (literally, "elder sons" in the special language), who act as assistants, and finally, there are many other auxiliaries who form a cortege with the wara-da when he carries the boli in nocturnal processions. These people are grouped together under the term tie-den' or tigi-den' ("sons of the master" in the special language). Conspicuous among them are the ta-tugu who [272] carry the flaming torches which are so characteristic of the nocturnal processions.

When the wara-da makes known the revelations of the god, he speaks through the tube with the horn. Since he uses the special language and since the tube distorts the sounds, the Komo-tigi must interpret for him. It is the Komo-dyeli who shouts the revelation which echoes through the night.

794 At the time of the two great annual ceremonies, the
796 wara-da takes the boli and the other liturgical equipment to the sacred grove. The Komo-tigi directs the ceremonies. The sacrifices are entrusted to the muru-kala-tigi among whom are to be noted: the one who brings the victim and who, when the ceremony takes place in the temple, leads it across the threshold (1); and the one who removes the victim and carries its body

1. This door is then called nyena-ma don'-da, "entry of the living," in the special language, and the muru-kala-tigi who brings the victim in is called da-kuna-sigi or "master of the fatal (literally 'bitter') door."

794 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and
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2. Then the door is called su-bo-da, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called moso-bolo (literally, "woman's hand").

[534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up of drums (denu-ba) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called kinge, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the wara-da shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

[782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the boli and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the wara-da gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, Du Niger au golfe de Guinée [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea], Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad [From Saint-Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 89). We have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called dou, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The dou are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of da-fou (native

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hemp), palm fibers, and leaves. On their heads they wear a cap or calotte, also made of hemp and surmounted by a yellowish-red wooden crest or a bird's beak, also of wood. There are two holes in the calotte for the eyes. These dou are given free dlo by the populace which makes up their cortege. They wander about the village and fields day and night..." (Binger).

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There is never any cult service or ceremony on Monday or Thursday.

The clergy serves as an administrative council for the property of the Komo-ya (brotherhood of the Komo) in accordance with the general principles already noted. The Komo-tigi of Tiguini, we have been told, is especially famous for respecting the principles which give the treasury of the brotherhood an exclusively fraternal character.

The Komo-ya are mutually independent, and all have experienced the kind of deviations which give rise to political action. The Komo has played a preponderant role in the affairs of the clan of Ségou, as is evident from the chronicle.

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Young men are taken into the brotherhood during the harvest festivals. They appear before the circle of initiates, while those present sing:

Da woro-na nana,
Bolo-ko den da woro-na,
Toro man na ko la-nyini.
Sira bo nin' ye, ko dugu le den',
Sira bo nin' ye ko dugu le sira.

Translation: "The sixth day has come, the sixth day of the newborn (1), and there has been no accident. Let us show the

1. That is, those who have just been born to a new status through the soli or bolo-ko.

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way to this child, the way which the village follows."

One by one they pass before the wara-da who, dressed in full regalia, is supposed to receive their oath. The oracle places the tube with the horn on each boy's head in turn, and the following dialogue takes place:

--Mun' b'i kun' (What is it you have on your head?), asks the oracle.

A kala be n kun' (I have his symbol (2) on my head). [274]

2. Kala, literally, is the cylindrical part of a thing; here, in the special language, it is a way of alluding to the tube with its horn and thus is a kind of symbol of the Komo.

I y'a ye wa (Have you seen it [the Komo])?

Ne m'a ye (No, I have not seen it).

I y'a fo ma min'ye, k'i kun' ti ki' son' n'i bien' ta a k'ifa (If you speak of it to anyone, may it [the Komo] smash your head and may it [the Komo] take your heart and your liver and kill you).

A ka ne fa (May it kill me).

I sirila nyama-n-fu dyala la (You are bound by the bark thong of the nyama) (1).

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1. An allusion to the strips of bark from the nyama tree (Bauhinia reticulata), which make up the common costume for concealing the officiants during the ceremonies. It is simply a way of saying: "Do you agree to join?" And the reply is equivalent to: "Yes, for as long as I shall live."

Ne si sirila a la (My life is bound by this thong).

Ni si m'a fo ma si ye, Komo k'i kisi (If you speak to no one about all this, may the Komo protect you [literally, "save you"]).

A ka ne kisi (May he protect me).

794 For a certain length of time, the new members are kept
796 in seclusion while being instructed by initiates, especially the older ones, who see to it that they learn the songs and dances and become familiar with the special language. It is in the course of this instruction that they are given certain formulas to use for recognition among the komo-den' (sons of the Komo). The following are two examples and by no means the only ones; each Komo-ya has its own formulas, and in addition the adepts of the various Komo-ya are readily inclined to fraternize, especially when they are alone, far from their respective groups. In such cases, the identical principles of their cults bring them together, and they question each other at once:

[539] --E b' a la wa (Are you a member)?

--M ba' la (I am).

--N'i b'a la, tyoko dyira r na (If you are, show me the secret sign).

[201] This sign varies and is completely arbitrary. Sometimes it involves raising the hand with the fingers spread apart in a certain way; at other times, twigs are placed in a special pattern, and so on. [275]

## The Nama

794 This cult arose at an unknown date at Missango (Bélédougou). The head of the Nama at Missango is addressed respectfully as Fura-tigi-ba, meaning literally, "grand master of the fura (fura specifically means "leaf" of a tree and, by extension, "remedy"). This is one of the expressions with double meanings which are so common in the brotherhoods: Fura-tigi-ba, the great physician, great savant, grand master.

The Nama is also called Nama-koro and Suya-koro, and a certain Nama is called Siriman 'fin'.

[778] Objects used in worship include; the Nama-kon-golo-u (craniums of the Nama), which are a kind of headdress, usually made of linge wood and shaped like fantastic birds; the wara-se (literally, "foot of the wara"), a small wooden board about a meter high with three horns affixed to it; and a similar board with two horns, called nye-bla.

794 if one had to travel, since the Dyuola [Diula] and other travelers were at the mercy of the whims and banditry of the [278] Nama-den' (1) and only avoided them to a certain extent by claiming

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1. Cf. Monteil, Binger, op. cit.; at the time of the great annual festivals of the Komo, all trading was halted for several days. Strangers could be sure of being respected only by claiming membership in the brotherhood. The same was true of the Nama.

to be of the Nama-den'. Even Moslems often became adherents of the Nama; all that was required of them was absolute secrecy and a few gifts in exchange for the secret passwords.

794 796 782 There are two great annual ceremonies: one at planting and the other at harvest, the dates for both decided by the Nama-tigi and his council. Each of them involves offerings, sacrifice, communion, and a nocturnal procession. Young members are usually admitted at the harvest ceremony.

The initiates gather for the sacrifice before the temple (Nama-bon'). Only the Nama-tigi and his clergy may enter the sacred place; the common worshipers remain outside. The sacrificial animals are brought up. Two sacrificers (muru-kala-tigi), naked to the waist, stretch their arms toward the four cardinal points and spit three times in each direction. Two dye-n-fa, also naked to the waist, hold the pieces of wood bearing horns and face the faithful. Three times the sacrificers utter the cry, "ture-dyo," twice alternating this cry with another, "dyo-Nama." They invoke the god two times, and then they slaughter the victims, sometimes inside the temple and sometimes outside.

The blood is carefully collected in receptacles, and the ashes of straw are added to it. All the cult objects, especially the boli itself, are smeared with the mixture. The Nama-tigi and the other principal initiates remove their clothing to anoint themselves with the same mixture and do not put on their garments again until the blood has dried on their bodies.

794 796 The food is eaten by those attending the ceremony; the millet mush which constitutes the meal is supposed to have been prepared by the wives of the dignitaries. This communion is the most important act of the ceremony.

When night comes, the procession of the Nama takes place. Its aim is to rid the village and its environs of sorcerers, the eaters of souls known as [279] suba (1), and to discover and

1 See Chapter 7 below. [Not translated.]

destroy the objects called siri which bear witness to the measures taken by the sorcerers to harm the natives.

The ritual cries of ture-dyo and dyo-Nama break into the racket of trumpets and drums while the Nama wanders about. The dye-n-fa, wearing the symbolic headdress (Nama-kongolo) and preceded by the da-ro-tigi tinkling his bell to warn people to clear the way, is followed or surrounded by torchbearers (called ta-tugula-n-tigi) who shout a hymn in praise of the god.

[539] A dyigima so Nama fambali: He is our host, mighty Nama.
A fyerela ka den': He blossoms in order to bear fruit.
Suba yo, nin kera malo-ko ye: Oh! Suba (2), shame on you!"

2. Literally, the "bonds" (see Chapter 7 below). [Not translated]

One of the persons in his entourage shouts defiance and curses in all directions, aimed at the suba, the eaters of souls.

It is during this procession that the dye-n-fa, at the instigation of the bearer of the symbol, discover the siri-fen' (2) [Ed., see footnote 2 above]; these are the objects used by the eaters of souls to accomplish their sinister designs or are the remains of their macabre repasts. Here it is a knife, there a pot, elsewhere a bit of human flesh (or so it is claimed)! All these things are dug up amidst cries, exclamations, and imprecations by the whole company.

A suba discovered in the course of these proceedings is hotly pursued, and it is said that, exhausted by the chase and

794 overpowered by the god, he always comes to die near the temple.
796 When this happens, the wretch's corpse is left there, naked; his clothing is thrown to the roof of the temple where it remains for a long time as an example. The siri-fen' are also displayed near the temple, within sight of the women, who are allowed to come and look at them.

It is just prior to these solemn sorties of the Nama that the clergy begins the proceedings to admit the youths who have just completed the soli. In the center of a circle of the faithful in front of the temple, they take their oath of secrecy:

794 --I y'a fo ma min' ye, boli k'i son' ta, k'i been'ta, ka
796 [280] dun' i dyu fe'ka bo i da fe: If you speak to anyone, may
539 the boli take your heart and your liver, may he go in through your anus and go out through your mouth.

--O ka ke: Let it be so.

-- Ni e ma fo ma ye, k'i kisi suba-u ma k'i son' si la, k'i son' keneya la: If you tell no one, may he protect you from the suba, grant you descendants, and give you good health.

-- O ka ke: Let it be so.

The new members must pay an entrance fee of a franc and ten kola nuts and must go through a kind of initiation. For a fortnight they live apart under supervision and are required to learn the songs and dances under the tutelage of the clergy and
[198] old men. They are told the significance of the words with double meanings, which constitute the language peculiar to the brotherhood, and are also given the formula of recognition, of which the following are some examples:

-- E b'a la wa? (Are you one of us?)

-- Ne b'a la (I am).

-- Fere tyon' kan' (Show the sign).

He shows it and explains it. The questioner then concludes:

--Dya! e b'a la, kol' (You are indeed one of us)!

794 of Kore-dyuga-tigi and has the same meaning.

[304] most part strangely accoutered dancers, each of whom dresses as his fancy dictates. As ornaments, the Kor'dyuga wear strings of beautiful red beans, which are inedible, called n-go ble. These beans are about the size of a large dragée and throughout the western Sudan are used as protection against evil spirits.

[292] These dancers have a leader, the Koro-duga-tigi or Kor'dyuga-tigi, who is further distinguished by a kind of cloak made entirely of bits of reed stalks. On his head he wears a conical hat made of the same reeds, and in his hand he carries a long wand from which hang birds' skulls, packets of sorghum straw, gourd stems, etc. In addition to the dancers, the clergy is accompanied by

[785] flagellants (bisa-tyi-la), torchbearers (ta-tugu-la-n-tigi), and people who lash themselves with bundles of thorns (the ngoni-sa-ma-u).

[534] Of course, the Kore has its orchestra, which includes drums (denu-ba), a kind of castanet (kinge), and gourds filled with seeds or pebbles (nkude) and pierced with holes.

794 The cult has the usual ceremonies, with the two great festivals at the times of planting and harvesting. On these oc-
● 796 casions the Kore-tigi officiates, as the nyana-n-son-na-ba does with respect to nyana dugu-da-siri. He makes the offerings, performs the sacrifices, and sets forth the requests at the foot of the sacred tree, after having thanked the god-protector. The kara and the Kore-kongolo are sprinkled with the blood of the victims; thus, the manes and the nyana of the boli are honored simultaneously.

[764] There is always a meeting of the brotherhood when a Kore-de dies. There are offerings, sacrifices, and communion with all the offerings, which require one or more days of orgies to be consumed, depending on the importance of the deceased, because elders in [282] important posts like that of nyana-n-son-na-ba, etc., are particularly honored at their death.

Young men are admitted only once every seven years, and it is at this time that the ceremonies are most elaborate.

794 At dusk on the day selected, the clergy proceeds with the great-
• 796 est pomp to the Kore-tu (grove of the Kore). The orchestra, composed of drums (denu-ba), bells (kinge), and gourds (nkude), leads the procession. Then come the high priest (Kore-tigi) and the kara-ma, "people of the plank of the dead" (kara), which one of them carries. Finally comes the dense crowd, motley and noisy, of wara-u, Kor-dyuga, bisa-tyi-la, ta-tugu-la-n-tigi, and ngoni-sa-ma.

Everyone is performing his role. The masked men imitate the beasts they represent; the costumed Kor'dyuga act like clowns; the flagellants make their switches hiss. Thus the crowd approaches the Kore-tu amidst a great din, but only the clergy may enter it. The bearer of the kara takes his place under the sacred tree. On orders from the Kore-tigi, silence falls for the reception of the Kore-de postulants.

The latter form a line facing the tree and the kara. They
[516] prostrate themselves in the dust for the duration of the sacred hymn of the Kore, which begins with the words, "Dyante Kore de-u." When they rise, they are dyante-ma-u, "affiliates."

The members thus admitted remain in the sacred grove for 15 days and are not allowed to return to the village. There they are instructed by the "elders." Then they are assigned to the different groups of wara; theoretically, an eldest son enters the group to which his father belongs, while the rest of the sons may choose whichever group they prefer. In addition to his duties during ceremonies, each wara has a certain job: the hyenas (suruku) guard and patrol the sacred grove and question the inquisitive to learn whether they are members (dyante ma); the Kore-duga see to the maintenance of the grove, clearing its environs in order to guard against the grove's being damaged by brush fires.

794 The offerings and the sacrifices, and then the communion
796 repast, follow the ceremony of admission and are accompanied
786 and followed by dancing and singing. The orgy then goes on for several days, as long as food remains. The various groups assemble for their dances, and the ta-tugu-la-n-tigi start the proceedings. With a flaming torch [283] in each hand, they chase each other, singe each other's backs and chests, and in the

794 process, let loose a rain of sparks which the Kore-duga zealously
•796 put out with leafy branches. Then each dancer, carrying what
786 is left of his torch, kneels before the drums, making an obscene gesture which arouses the laughter of the onlookers and giving the cries, roars, or laugh of the "wild beasts." Elsewhere, the nyoni-sa-ma are roaming among the drinkers, tearing at themselves with thorns. Flagellants lash themselves with switches
[785] that leave cuts from which the blood flows. They stiffen themselves against the pain and keep up this cruel sport, which once again the Kore-duga mitigate by binding up the wounds.

There appears to be no doubt that during these orgies the most shameful excesses are committed without the slightest restraint.

## The Nya

794 This brotherhood is highly esteemed in all the Bambara villages in the cantons of Say and Karadougou. It is less common in the canton of Séladougou; in the canton of Saro, five-sixths of the villages are loyal to it. It is rarely found in Nyansannari, and outside these areas in the circle of Djenné, there are only a few scattered Nya brotherhoods in the Bendougou and Ségou areas.

The cult arose in the Bendougou region. As has been
[443] noted above, the villages of Moribala, Kourbadougou, Diali, etc., are market villages where all the boli are found, together with directions for using them.

778 The boli of the Nya consists of a piece of wood from 25
794 to 30 centimeters in length and from 10 to 15 centimeters in height and width. It is wrapped in an absorbent material, usually cotton. The blood of the victims and the liquid of the libations are poured on this boli, and then hairs or feathers and bits of entrails, eggs, and kola nuts are stuck to it, giving it a
[281] repulsive appearance. It is true that the boli is often concealed from inquisitive eyes by putting it in a container made of an old piece of the hide of a she-goat. However, since the container is given the same treatment as the boli it contains, it is just as disgusting.

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

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[691]

near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-mina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

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796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

## Chapter 5

## The Clans

### 1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

173 there is no country called Mandé and there never was. Every chief situates its capital wherever seems best to him."

Among these capitals are counted: Kangaba, Miami, Tabou, Diakala, Kounfangué ... For the Bambara, Mandé is the center from which issued the 48 Sudanese populations which spread out following a definite movement (3) to cover the territory included between the

3. S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara" [Notes on Bambara Theodicy]. [Ed., Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, Vol. 135 (1949), pp. 187-213.]

Atlantic coast, the Senegal, the Niger, and up to Dahomey. (4)

4. Zahan, Aperçu sur la théogonie dogon [A Look At Dogon Theogony].

[796] The memory of this expansion is still preserved today in the septennial cult which brings all the people to the sanctuary of Kangaba, the Mandé blow (the vestibule of Mandé), under the direction of persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family. (5) Other

5. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

traditions recognize two centers of expansion: one to the south of Kangaba at Balanzan, the other in the Nioro circle to the south of Goumbou, Waghadou. Intertribal septennial cults commemorate this event.

From our historical point of view, we know very little about the origins of the Bambara.

172 Prehistoric geological strata, still poorly dated, found in the valleys of the Senegal and the Niger show us that these territories were very anciently inhabited. Franz de Zeltner (6) has gathered

6. Fr. Zeltner, "Quelques gisements préhistoriques de la vallée du Sénégal" [Some Prehistoric Strata in the Valley

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considered as being in the same category as their grandparents; they are said to belong to the same age class.

561 [57] The relations between boys and girls before the cere-
857 monies of circumcision and excision are governed by a sort of non-consummated marriage uniting the children of the different ton.

The little girl (ton-musso) must take care of the clothes and household of her infant husband (tontié); later she must decorate his house with designs he tells her to make. In return, her husband will give her gifts and will help cultivate her parents' field. When the girl marries in earnest, her tontié must himself give her to her husband. Throughout this false marriage, the young girl's virginity must be respected, and her tontié is held responsible for it.

561 Before their circumcision, all the children are affiliated according to their age classes to the brotherhood of the n'Tomo (see the chapter on religion). The oldest of the group will be the head of his class; all the little chiefs are subjects of the chief of the oldest group: the n'tomo-tigi and to his deputy, the n'tomo-tigi-syere. The brotherhood prepares the children for the circumcision initiation; it regulates the common work, the religious ceremonies, and the celebrations. It settles disputes that may arise between members.

561 The different ceremonies of the n'Tomo, which take place each
796 year after the harvest, have been described by Monteil (1) and by

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

Tauxier (2). They include offerings, sacrifices to the guardian spirit,

2. Tauxier, La religion bambara [The Bambara Religion].

a communion, and masked dances followed by a lash from the ritual whip, which marks the definitive acceptance of the neophytes.

561 Later, those who have belonged to the same n'tomoya and who have undergone the soli together are united for life. They are fulani, that is to say, twins (they are born the same day to the sexual, social,

782 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The
778 technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The

2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. X, 1940.

Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called pembele, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the Nyama or boli, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

794 The cults can be individual and familial or general for the whole village, such as the dasiri and the dangu. They are organized by religious societies, dyo, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the Komo (principally), the Kworé, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, the Nya. The women are also grouped in dyo, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the N'Domo.

The Komo is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (boli-w, dyo-w), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the
796 role it plays in justice and public affairs. The Komo has obligatory seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the tinto-w (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the komo-sen-w from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the komo-sen-w to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for 15 days, with a sacrifice to the komo-ba. The ceremony ends with
[796] the nomination of a new komo-tigi (chief of the Komo), who will exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

794 796 766 that period; his body will not be buried but will be carried off by members of the Komo, who will take it to a crossroads and crush it with the aid of komo-se-w [sic]. The remains will be hidden in a secret place. The same treatment is accorded to the komo-tigi who dies during his seven-year term.

794 The cult is cantonal, and the various komo-tigi take their orders from their colleagues of the capital. The cult formerly was interlcan and intertribal. Labouret (Les Mandingues et leur langue [The Mandingo and Their Language] ) has made a table of the seven categories of persons who make up the hierarchical society of the initiates.

794 793 After initiation into the Komo cult, a natural sequel to circumcision, the young man may, if he so desires, be initiated into other cults.. He then enters a powerful spiritual family which unites all its members by ties of brotherhood. This brotherhood is superimposed on the normal social hierarchy of the flã-tõ [this term is [564 probably the same as flanton]. The chief of the brotherhood is en- 567] titled nyama-tigi; he is generally a man of caste or a slave. He acquires his position as chief either by inheriting it, by election, or [778] by founding a new cult. To do this latter, he must buy an altar, gna, from the village or from the brotherhood that already possesses this cult. Such a purchase is considered a marriage with the gna and is accompanied by drinking. The higher-ranking initiates (dyenfaw: masters of the truth) are auxiliaries of the nyama-tigi and participate in the oracle, wara-da. All the initiates are more or less divine. The clergy includes, in addition, a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli, herald of the god. To become one of the faithful, one must pay an entrance fee and swear an oath of secrecy, obedience, and fellowship. The clergy manages the cult's treasury which is fed by the entrance fees to the brotherhood, by fees levied for a class promotion, by contributions required for the major ceremonies, and by fines imposed on the members.

The brotherhood is a spiritual family which is organized in a fashion similar to the natural filiation of the community. The nyama-tigi plays the role of the fa; the dyen-fa-w and the notable members form a sort of council for settling, with the chief, all ques- [527] tions. The cult does nothing on Mondays and Thursdays, the work holidays.

794 A strict internal discipline regulates the members' conduct; this discipline is founded on secrecy, obedience, and speed in carrying out orders. An accused confesses [86] his faults under the effect of the oath, torture, or divination, and the punishments are determined according to the seriousness of the offense in the eyes of the clergy. These punishments are corporal (flogging, confinement in irons, deprivation of food, death) or pecuniary (fines, confiscation); they may include forced labor for the benefit of the clergy. We shall see further on the social and political role these brotherhoods play in Bambara life.

794, 796 The Kworé society carries out the rites concerning the sky, space, the cardinal points, and the atmospheric manifestations of Faro, notably rain. The ceremonies generally take place around a tree, the kworé-jigi, situated to the east of the village. The altars are placed either in the brush, in the chief's house, or near the village. The society owns a field of small millet which is reserved to meet the needs of the cult.

[793] The n'Domo includes all the non-circumcised. Heading it is the chief, assisted by a sacrificer, muru-kala-tigi, and by a master of ceremonies, dyoloko-tigi. The society is divided into five grades, corresponding to the five fundamental altars; the initiate advances a grade each year. The society possesses a mask, a whip, and five musical instruments. An annual ceremony takes place after the harvest and includes a blood sacrifice and a ritual fight, followed by a new initiation. The society also owns a ritual field cultivated by its members.

[776] The Nama brotherhood (Nama, "hyena" in Mandé) plays an important role in the Ségou region. Nama is the god of the incomplete, the unique god, whose annual ceremonies at sowing time and harvest time are observed by the men and women together.

794 The society of Kono, whose hut is situated in the middle of the village, must also be mentioned, as well as those of Dyo, an old divinity, Nia or Gnã, Wara, and Duga.

To all of these societies, which have been described by Tauxier, Monteil, G. Dieterlen, etc., must be added the women's societies, still imperfectly known but very powerful and particularly feared by the men. The principal female dyo in the Bamako region are: the Niagua, the Kulukutu, and the Jide which assembles its initiates on Mondays and Fridays.

769 participate in men's lives, protect them, and make their fields
775 fertile. The farming tools are presented at their altars before the tillage, and every year their souls come to animate the maskers who dance in their honor under the supervision of the Komo. After the grain is threshed, they receive the first products and are offered sacrifices.

h. Other Rites

788 Besides the rites concerning the person, the Bambara have others, such as those relating to the household wastes where the forces of men are accumulated. The purpose of these rites is to offer these forces to Faro and to regenerate and purify men. The wastes are burned periodically, the men breathe in the fumes, and the ashes are thrown in the river. Sacrifices are offered to the god, and special dances accompany the ceremony.

796 Rain rites common to all of Africa are practiced in May by the members of the Kworé society. The rites for renewing the year involve individual, familial, and collective participation. The signs of the world are traced on the walls of individual or collective sanctuaries, and by the intermediary of a sacrifice on the altars, by dances and rhythmic chants, man renews the cardinal points and the forces of the world which in turn renew his soul. (All these rites have been described by G. Dieterlen in the Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

B. Special Technique In General Usage

773 In Bambara thought, "every technique is a reparation taught man by Faro, a palliative to the cosmic disorder which is generally caused by an infraction of taboo ... Men first lived by gathering their food, then later by fishing and hunting; they used only their hands. Little by little the techniques appeared, following a chronology remembered by the Bambara of today. The first material to be used was the fiber of the nyama tree frond which were made the first fishing nets, the first sling, the first covering for the sexual parts." (1) The second material was wood from which the farming

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

776 out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to pre-
177 serve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of
798 Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of

1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

776 The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them
•796 corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شَيْطَان ,
782 and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané,
[192] "satan, " even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices. In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form. And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono, [778] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help 776 thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter 796 evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba 534 horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the 782

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3. Formerly the trumpets and horns were ivory. The Moslem tyrants quickly had them confiscated, no doubt because they knew the price of an elephant tusk. At present the Bambara use only cattle horns and those of the koba, a large antelope which grows to the size of a fine heifer. (Koba is the word that designates this antelope in the Peul language; the Bambara call it dadjé, "white mouth," no doubt because it has two white lines on its jowls.)

crowd grip and terrify you and make you think yourself transported into the midst of a sabbath of long ago. When one has been present at these scenes, one does not doubt the veracity of the Negroes who say: "When the boli appears it is hideous and freezes with fear whoever sees it. It is as black as soot and its face disappears in a flame above which there are horns."

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The face disappearing in a flame inevitably recalls the idea of an infernal spirit, and one who has been present at certain sacrifices to the Komo and the Nama, for example, and has heard the blasphemies of the sacrificer no longer doubts that it is Satan himself that is worshipped here. The blasphemies are repeated by all those present: Alla k'an bla, "may God leave us" (the real meaning: "We do not want God"); Alla djampa ba, "God is a great traitor" (meaning: "God makes promises and does not fulfill them, since he has decreed everything and his decrees are immutable"; A yé né djampa, "he has betrayed me," says a Negro of someone who has made him a promise and has not kept it). One is further convinced by being present at the sacrifice to Touafé Bla (1), one of the most ancient boli. The

1. The name Touafé Bla undoubtedly comes from the custom of suspending

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this boli from the belt and hanging
it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate')." /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and al-
[192] though they have taken the words sétané شَيْطَان and djahanéma جَهَنَّم from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time.

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Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoroba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, or-
361 ganize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this

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Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

The little girls also have an organization into groups; but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the
851 mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for

796 857 the sacrifice is furnished by the children themselves; all of them together work a small field for this purpose during the winter, and if the harvest is not sufficient, they go begging from door to door so that nothing will be lacking at the feast -- neither d'lo, the millet beer, nor kola nuts. On the evening of this great day, each new initiate chooses his n'golo mouso, as they call the little girl each one takes as his "sister of the heart," his bonne amie as one would say in France /his girlfriend/. But she is more; she is a little maid of all work, and the gift which he gives her every year at the celebration is more a payment than a gift of friendship, "pure and simple." /94/

7. The Genie Protector of Circumcised Youths

794 776 778 At circumcision the Bambara leave the association of the n'tomo and place themselves under the protection of more powerful genii. These genii are all of the same nature, only the name differs with each region, and all the confraternities are copied after one and the same model. The most widespread is that of the n'golo (1).

1. In Bani it is the n'goso rather than the n'golo.

The n'golo is nothing but two forked branches fastened together and hung on a light dloma (2). One can meet it quite often in a

[342] 2. Dloma are forked sticks on which rest the crossbars or beams that hold up the flat terrace roofs. The name dloma is given to all forked sticks, small and large.

corner of the village, out of doors, but usually it is under a small shed or hut. This genie gives the youths not only strength, vigor, and health, but also the talent, if not of pleasing women, at least of attracting them and thus being able to obtain some crude satisfactions. It helps the unmarried to meet the girl of the moment, and thanks to it,

794 The to-n-dé, or members of the association, are formed into groups, each corresponding to a circumcision, and all these groups, united among themselves by a common bond, which is the worship to be rendered to the n'golo genie, submit to and obey the head, the n'golo tigi, preferably called to-n-tigi. Thanks to this unity, a host of quarrels and fights is avoided, and they all help each other, sharing in the joys and sorrows of their fellow members. In a word, this association corresponds, in miniature, to our societies of mutual assistance and help.

794 To get a girl of the moment, the young to-n-dé from time to
•796 time sacrifice a small pullet. But a big sacrifice is made yearly and the victim is at least a goat; it is offered in the name of all. The offering of the general sacrifice does not prevent each initiate from adding a hen and a kola nut; food abounds, millet beer flows in streams, the association furnishes food and drinks to the whole village and to friends from surrounding villages. On this day also the youths circumcised during the year enter the confraternity of the n'golo and become to-n-de, or members of the organization of the fla-n-to. To do so they must spend from 80 to 120 cowrie shells (2 to 3 sous) and offer to the fetish the hen and two kola nuts as a sacrifice.

## 8. The Women's Genie

796 Not all villages possess this fetish tree, which is called mouso
824 ka djiri (2), but all hamlets have a genie whose chief function is to

2. This tree is often a fig tree called n'zoro or a toro sycamore (ficus vogeli, ficus ferruginosa). Mouso means "woman"; ka is particle indicating possession; djiri means "tree"; the whole phrase therefore means "the tree of the women."

796 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the
825 dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as
782 a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice, the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all
782 participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered
778 by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives
776 homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

(man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri
778 sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual;
824 the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

782 857 There are many kinds of saraka, and they are offered for just about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats, guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked. This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful hunts, and of protecting themselves from the gnâma of their many victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of saraka to some practices that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking, have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word saraka must be given a broader meaning than that which I have attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots, who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table, Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets. And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the Bambara.

## 2. Gnéna of the Third Group; The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful Gnéna

776 782 796 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers; saraka are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men, women, and children -- participate. Dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

776 782 796 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age." If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village, and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held, there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

## The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

852 796 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the children during the winter, together with the small donations received from the people of the village, allows the n'tomigi (head of the confraternity) and his siéré (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast of kola nuts, millet beer, or d'lo, and /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, or dégé. The day of the celebration is set by the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for it two weeks in advance. In the blon, or entrance huts, and in the shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing dloki, bougi, bogo, and yaba (1), which will be worn for the first time on

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1. Dloki, a large blouse. Bougi, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

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The end of this strip is tucked up. Bogo, garment worn by girls until their marriage, consisting of a strip of cloth tied at the waist and falling in back to make a train. Yaba, boys' jacket, especially common in Bani country.

that day. A swarm of children patch the yellow or white blouses that will be worn during the dance, and grease and re-grease the mask of the n'tomo. They pay special attention to the horns, which are often hidden under little thongs of red leather decorated from end to end with well-polished cowrie shells as white as snow.

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But now we come to the longed-for day! All the little rebels go single file to the fetish tree, and each carries the hen, its feet tied, which he intends for the sacrifice. They /110/ all take off their blouses -- the little undergarment allows freer movement and is less hampering -- and, after some whispering they finally end up squatting, fixing their big, black eyes on the leader, the n'tomotigi, who begins the sacrifice with the assistance of his aide, the siéré.

This little fellow is really funny, as with the solemnity of an old man he pours the dégé, sprinkles the blood of the hens, and noisily spits the remains of a piece of chewed kola nut onto the sacred tree, the dwelling of his genie. I do not doubt that he is convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that he is not addressing a tree trunk that has no consciousness; he believes that he is in the presence of who watches him, waits for him, and asks only to grant his wishes. Since he is addressing a powerful being, fear and emotion at first make him tremble; but gradually his voice grows firmer, and very clearly he pronounces his formula: "N'tomo ye, see this hen, a beautiful hen, isn't it? It is fat! n'tomo, on behalf of all of us I offer you this hen as a sacrifice. Favor us, defend us against the fury of the genii of the bush and against the malicious. Make us strong and vigorous, give us plenty to eat and drink, drive sickness from us. Give us water and a good harvest, n'tomo, and give wealth to our families."

852 796 782 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath, " says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

852 796 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons [293] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter ) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

1. Né, "me, " "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

[291] 2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

85 796 his "sister of the heart." In fact, on the day of his admission to the n'tomo every small Bambara chooses a n'golo mouso to whom he gives a small gift each year. The dreadful part of this custom is that in Bambara country the n'golo mouso is less prudish than the girl friend or sweetheart of a little French boy and is often a little maid-of-all-work who lends herself without qualms to unhealthy and indecent play.

After the feast, which takes about three hours, the n'tomo déou (sons of the n'tomo) leave the place of sacrifice and return to the village in Indian file, preceded by drums. D'lo, or millet beer, awaits them, but before touching the divine liqueur they must perform a bloody rite. It is hideous, and yet, it is the high point and chief attraction of the celebration!

852 796 785 On the public square, in front of drums that give the measure and beat the rhythm, the young n'tomo déou flagellate themselves, usually until they bleed. The old men run up, dragging their mats after them; the women, squatting on their tiny stools, clap their hands and sing; and mothers wrap the loins of their children in long white scarves to protect their lower abdomens from misdirected blows. The n'tomigi and his siéré -- honor to whom honor is due -- go into the arena, and while the little leader holds his switch above his head with both hands, /112/ the siéré beats him hard with his own switch on the back chest, calves, soles of his feet, and everywhere. When he is tired of beating or his switch breaks, he stops and the leader in his turn gives a round to his aide. In this way, two by two, according to age and size, the children flagellate (1) each other. The flick, flack

1. In Bani country each child flagellates himself. Although that is not the usual custom, it may be encountered in many villages.

of whip lashes, which cause blood to spurt, bruise the flesh, and always leave a furrow as wide as a thumb, may often be heard for hours. Little boys of six or seven years often stop at the second blow to scratch their backs and open their mouths to cry, but I have seen some stay unmoved just like their elders of ten to twelve years, without a

852 tear, a complaint, or a cry of pain, and they are so imperious that
796 one might think they were of bronze.
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## The N'golo, the Special Fetish of the Circumcised

852 The children of this fetish, whose function I explained in the
794 preceding chapter, grant themselves many days of celebration in its honor in the course of the year. The main festival, however, is annual and in addition to the dégé, a hen, and two kola nuts offered by each initiate, a goat is sacrificed on behalf of all.

Since it is from this fetish that the fla-n-to organization derives its existence, its members, the to-n-déou, offer drink and food to the whole village for two or three days. The women, too, contribute their share to this horrible drinking bout, and their queen (fama, massa) -- humbling herself before the to-n-tigi, head of the fla-n-to and priest of the n'golo, who thoughtlessly wastes the produce of the field worked by his subjects in the winter -- distributes many kola nuts and adds still more to the d'lo, which already flows in streams.

The beer is drunk out of doors on the public square, and everyone -- men, women, and children -- is there, shouting, dancing,
[346] and getting drunk. Seated under a goua, a shed covered with coarse mats, /113/ and surrounded by his acolytes (the siéré, the djéli, and the djalatiké), the to-n-tigi sits in the place of honor, and it is he who directs the drinking and the dances. He is really king on these days, and all obey him at the slightest sign, gesture, or word. When he gets up to romp or take a turn before the drums, he is honored; all the initiates call "you you," shake their caps (ban fla), and compete as to who will take his gun, spear, stick, or ax and beat the time for the dance. But he wants to speak; he must speak; he feels the need to issue an order, to give thanks, or to impose a light fine on his band; and his spokesman runs to his side. He repeats the speech of his chief word for word and sentence by sentence, and sometimes even adds a comment of his own, for some Bambara have a sharp wit and very easily find a saying to bring a laugh.

852 194 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

## The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 796 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

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1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover, the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking, and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

## The Sinsin, the Special Twin's Fetish

The sacrifice to a sinsin is made on the umbilical cord which is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is never an orgy. Sacrifices to a sinsin are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins: when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook d'lo, the millet beer, and the

The gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, assumes office from the first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours d'lo, or millet beer, and dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each family head in order of seniority offers it a little dégé and a little blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers, hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the dasiri

A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible. Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning after the konio, or first night of marriage, for example, but the festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish. After an offering of dégé and a little d'lo, the throat of a sheep or goat is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family, comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is [252] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of seasoning. The dégé and d'lo of the main sacrifice are drunk under

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circum-
796 cised youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children," "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or displeased it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. Individuals sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment, always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal, the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
778 they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

## The Semioccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation, may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The korétigi, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kâra ma ("man of

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the koré.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[718] the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

794 796 292 522 Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are required to wear which they twine around their necks several times or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

794 colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does
796 not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others
292 ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and
522 kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

794 The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in
796 the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the
[185] ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kârâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children
[535 of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté), " and each dances
731] the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever
• 796 a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 After the initiation the koretigi (priest of koré) proceeds with
796 sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of
782 /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kârâ, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and un-
796 til morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

[535] The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open
796 the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and
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794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
782 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the koréde. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

778 At the annual sacrifice the gouatigi, or head of the family,
596 offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no
782 matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect.
He also offers d'lo, or millet beer, and all his family make merry.
[574] Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village
does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited,
and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 The family boli take the interests of the head of the family in
596 their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses
of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth,
wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also
appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance.
Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered
into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of
unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood.
Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called
by the generic name of gno four, "millet medicine"), but especially
at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals.
The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5ff.), is taboo
for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it
its own.

## 4. Boli whose Power is Great

778 I call powerful boli all those gnâ of every shape and size whose
782 worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who
796 have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives
never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these boli;
some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with
blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters
and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani
country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the
same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives
rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

778 of the gnéna, or djiné, and like it or not, the worship of the dead is
782 trivial in comparison, a little devotion, one might say.
●796 These boli are greatly feared and dreaded. They render justice and decide all controversies; they have the right of life and death over human beings; and it is through their intermediary that the Bambara avenge themselves and take reprisal on a real or imaginary enemy.

778 No victims are too fine for the powerful boli. There was a time
782 when men were sacrificed to them -- I think that this cannot possibly be doubted. At the time of the Negro king N'golo, says the legend, a man of Faléma -- a small village on the road from Ségou to Koutiala which is now in ruins -- went to the king with his fetish /139/ Sa folo. The king had himself initiated, wanted to own it, and his first victim was the owner himself, the man from Faléma. If old men talk to you about the capture of Sikasso by the French, they will all tell you that, on the morning of the attack, men were sacrificed to the chief boli of the city. Were there not, in 1907, in a temple not far from Koutiala, a row of human skulls hung on the walls as ex voto? A little before the conquest, under the reign of the Moslem princes El-Hadj-Omar and Amadou, the master of the Nama fetish of Misango was asked to go to Ségou with his idol. He said he did not own one, but a woman betrayed him, and a search was made in Misango and its environs. The man was informed in time, and he changed the hiding place of his Nama, and the woman, convicted of lying, was given him as a slave in compensation. A little later, a sacrifice of thanksgiving was offered to the fetish, and the traitorous woman was among the victims. She was old, and the god considered her too tough; he ordered that she be sold and some children be bought, since they were victims worthy of it. Its orders were carried out, "for," say the storytellers who sing it praises, "when sacrifice is made to the Nama one must never forget nzégéné dégé (1), honey, two red

1. Millet flour and nzégéné (Balanites oethiopica).

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Gnâma fambali, bo n'yé!
Murderer gnâma (who kills), go away from me!

And coming back they sing songs and even improvise some to greet the old and influential men of the village. Back in their huts they kneel on the mat to stretch out or sit down, and there is silence, the silence of schoolgirls which is not broken except in secret, with trembling and in a low voice.

3. The Da Woro Festival, or the Sixth Day Festival

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Boys and girls have paid the tribute of blood to the tribe, five days have already elapsed, and this is the evening before the sixth. Far over there in the west the sun has disappeared behind the heavy baobab trees that border the horizon, myriads of stars twinkle in the sky, and the moon, followed by Venus (Kolo mouso, Nièlé, "Nièlé, wife of the moon"), traces on a blue background its silver crescent singed with a gold border.

All the paths that lead to the village are full of people walking, seeming like an endless ribbon or a snake that folds back on itself only to stretch out suddenly. Behind the band of young girls walk the women, each with a black cherub on her back that always wakes up to cry and demand the breast; and to them the girls have entrusted their little loincloths, the cloth slings with which they gird themselves for the dance. The girls walk quickly, for although they carry on [482] their heads tall pyramids of gourds held in nets of large mesh, although they carry the fiancé's present to the queen of his heart -- salt; dégé, or millet flour mixed with honey water and milk; d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer; millet and dried fish in which worms crawl; they are confortable in their clothing; /183/ nothing hinders their movements except a narrow cloth band three fingers wide which passes between the legs, is fastened at the waist in front, and waves in back in a limp and soft train. And in the night there is the rustling of dry grass trodden under foot; /there are/ long peals of laughter, light jibes that are well aimed and to the point, and witticisms, for the maiden's tongues have been loosened, and they do not lack wit.

796 The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen
88| like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double, leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they recall the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised
[376 and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger
431] gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

88| The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a
796 moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/
301 are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in

each ear ten to twelve rings of soft iron, tin, or silver, and those that they put on their fingers and toes number more than twenty.

On the braids of their hair, all running with grease, they hang bits of amber and rings of polished pottery as white as snow, and around all their necks are bead necklaces from which dangle bits of amber, grigris, and here and there, held by leather strips, pottery rings that fall back between the shoulders and in front on their bosoms. They also bind their foreheads with narrow crowns of rainbow-colored beads or diadems of coral. Such are the Negro girls in their most beautiful array.

At the homes of the circumcised and excised, the huts and courts are crowded with people, for in addition to friends and story-tellers /griots/ -- the poor troubadours of the country -- there may be in each home older married daughters who have come with their husbands, children, and parents-in-law, and the fiancé's delegation to his betrothed seem to be in every corner. This is really the festival of the tribe, and everybody is present; only the fiancés are excluded and cannot appear on this day. And how very Bambara it is! In one spot people quench their thirst with great drinks of d'lo, or millet beer, while nearby, squatted around steaming gourds, others stuff themselves with to, or gruel. The hands held out to you are running with sauce; the children who surround you are covered with leftovers from the feast and brandish under your nose bones that they gnaw clean with their bare teeth, and while they call to you Sogo ("some meat"), the satiated people next to you exclaim: "Abarka, thank you Né fara san, I am full for the moment." And everywhere there is an infernal bedlam! Old women beat furiously on inverted pumpkins in conari full of water /185/; youths beat drums, women and young girls clap their hands in rhythm, and everybody shouts the glories of the family. The families of the circumcised and excised are beside themselves, so great is their joy, and if you are one of their close friends you will be shown all the gifts received, in plain sight in the court. You are made to taste of everything, to touch and feel everything, and, just as on the day when the child is given its name, you receive, on leaving, the kola nut of life (le ni woro).

881 It is after midnight. The circumcised boys are seated in the
•796 place of honor where their older brothers sat before, and they furious-
794 ly shake their gourd disks strung on sticks. Leaning on their millet stalks, the regulation sticks, the excised girls in their turn arrive at the public square, singing and shaking their pierced gourds, and the dances begin as at the soli si and continue until morning. Outside, under the sacred trees, the bell of the fetish tinkles and summons the initiates, and the Komo god roars through the mouth of its herald. At a sign from the priest the circumcised boys get up, leave the village, and go under the big trees to swear loyalty and to dedicate themselves, body and soul, to the prince of darkness (1). How can

1. The scene which I describe sometimes takes place the evening before. Sometimes, by order of a sorcerer and for a reason considered serious, the entrance into the sect of a fetish is postponed until later.

this scene be described! The circumcised boys sit under the god's favorite tree, and the crowd of initiates, grouped by villages, gather around the gourds full of d'lo that froths and bubbles. Little fires are lighted and cast a strange light into the night, and a circle of crouching human beings appears and takes shape. The master of the idol (Komo tigi); the sacrificer (mourou kala tigi); the beadle (darotigi), who rings for the sacrifice and gathers the initiates; the fetish's storytellers /griots/ (Komo djeli maou), who sing the praises of the god, fall into catalepsy at the sacrifices and then give out oracles; [778 the Komo warada, who wear a coat covered with the feather of guinea 534] hens, hens, egrets, etc., and a long horned mask, and who carry the fetish to the place of sacrifice and blow into an iron tube that ends in two horns /186/ and is at once idol and trumpet, and draw from it frightful "fouin fouin" that freeze you with fear: in short, all the staff of the Komo appear on the scene, and there is a lascivious dance, the dance of the god, the sacred dance. Then there is the

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rallying cry, bellowed by a hundred throats, "kou kou kou, ke ke ke"; drums roll, and drunken voices shout:

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Stop, let us go and see the gourd (of beer).
Bara ma dja an na,
When the beer has made us joyful (1),

1. Dja, "to make happy," "to please," "to be agreeable," "to make joyful."

An na youyouba yougouba.
We will dance and dance (2).

2. Yougouba, "to dance with a shaking of the whole body."

Gnâ tigi, né ka nougouni-n-ko min yé?
Master of the gnâ, what has happened to my (hen's) entrails? (3)

[782]

3. This line recalls a peculiarity of the sacrifice of the newly initiated. With one twist of the finger the sacrificer takes the entrails out of the hen, and when the young initiate wants to draw it, he is quite surprised to find that none of the viscera are in it any more.

Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
A master of the gnâ (kodit) the entrails will come out together.

Excited, or rather irritated, by the wait, the circumcised boys get up, move forward in a line, and prostrate themselves before the god's escort, the one who shakes without any rest under his cloak of feathers and brings resounding blasts from his horned tube (4), and

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4. While the trumpet is blowing, the initiates accompany it with pipes.

grows and shrinks by raising and lowering his jointed mask. The hour of the initiation has rung, and they will be born into the religious life.

The master of the idol, the Komo tigi, places the horned iron tube on each initiates shoulder, and in a slow, solemn, hollow voice, he says these words of the initiation ceremony (5):

5. During this ceremony the initiates are prostrate.

For the Komo

Q. Moun bé i koun? What have you on your head?
A. A kala be n'koun. His handle is on my head (repeated three times). /187/
Q. I y'a yé wa? Have you seen him?
A. Né m'a yé. I have not seen him.
Q. Nin be ma fa. I y a fo ma min yé, a k'i fo! He kills a man. If you speak of him to anyone, may he kill you!
A. Ni ne y'a fo ma min yé, a k'a né fa! If I speak of him, may he kill me!
Q. I si sirila gnâma-n-fou, djala la. Your life is fastened onto the cedar with gnâma-n-fou!
A. Né si sirila à la. My life is bound to it.
Q. Ni se ma fo ma si yé, Komo k'i kisi! If you do not speak of him to anyone, may the Komo be your protector!
A. A ka né kisi! May he be my protector!
Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, i kono ka founou, a k'i fa! If you speak of if, may your abdomen swell, may he kill you!
A. A ka né fa! May he kill me!
Q. Komo k'i son ni bien (1) ta, ki koun ti, né kana bo djoli kana bo.

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1. Bien, a woman's sexual organs. Bien, "horn"; this is a veiled term sometimes meaning a man's organs. They also say k'i bien ta, "may he tear out the organs."

May the Komo take away your heart and your organs, may he crush your head without your brains coming out, without your blood coming out.

A. O k'a ké. May it be so.

For the Nama

Q. I y'a fo ma min ye, Boli k'i so ta, k'i bien ta (1), ka doun i

/1. Same as preceding footnote 1/

djoufé ka bo i da fé. If you speak of him, may the boli cause your house and your wives to perish, may he enter you by the anus and leave you by the mouth.

A. O k'a ké! May it be so!

Q. K'i Kono gni bri, ka gni bri, gna bara.

A. O k'a ké.

Q. Ni e ma fo ma yé, k'i disi soubaou ma. K'i son sila, k'i son kénéyala! If you keep the secret may he save you from the souba, may he give you descendants and health!

"Tell me, what have you on your head? Yourlife is henceforth bound with gnâma-n-fou (bark of Bauhinia reticulata): if you talk, /188/ if you reveal our mysteries, may your abdomen swell, may the Komo kill you, may he tear out your organs, may he tear out your heart, may he break your head without your brain coming out, without blood flowing."

This ceremony in the night, in the light of the little fires that distort the shadows and lengthen them, impresses, pierces, and grips the youths, and they are heard to answer all atremble in these words that at every moment break through the nasal tone of the pipes and

881 796 794 the trumpet blasts: "I have the kala (1) on my head, my life is hence-

1. Kala, "handle of a tool," "a pestle," "an oblong object"; Komo kala, iron tube ending in two horns.

forth bound with gnâma-n-fou; if I reveal the secrets of the sect, may my abdomen swell and may the Komo kill me." Then they get up, 881 796 794 539 and the crowd of initiates sing hymns to the Komo at the tops of their voices:

Da Woro la nana, Boloko déou da Worola.
To the festival of Da Woro he (the fetish) has come, to Da Woro of the circumcised (he has come).
Toro ma na kola gnini.
Toro (2) has not come to cause evil.

2. Toro, the name of a Komo.

Sira bo nin ye, ko dougoulé dén.
To him we give an (open) road because (he is) a child of the village.
Sira bo nin yé, ko dougoulen sira.
Give him an (open) road to know the road of the children of the village (He is one of us, let us make room for him) (3).

3. Songs of Nama:
A djigina so Nama fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a'é.
The Nama that kills has paid us a visit, he has visited us*, let us not be

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*The Nama protects against the souba, initiates of siri, reputed to be cannibals.

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neglectful toward him (let us welcome
the Nama who comes to visit us).
A fiéréla ka den, boli fiéréla ka den.
He has blossomed to have fruits, the
boli has blossomed to have fruits
(the Nama has had a child).
Souba yo nin kéra ma lo ko yé.
Souba yo. This is done because of shame.
Souyaya kéra dabali bé an koyé.
The practice of the souba has been done
(among us), we have a means of pro-
tecting ourselves from it. /189/

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While these hymns are being sung, the circumcised boys dance with the idol -- this is the standard expression to signify that for the first time they are executing the lascivious motions of the sacred dance.

And when they get back to their places, they are transformed, they are no longer the plain, good children who, even the day before, approached you nicely with a frank smile on their lips. They have become Bambara, and we, we are white men and strangers, masters and conquerors, and between them and us an abyss has been opened. And this abyss is opened further every day, for every time the god Komo comes out of its temple and out of the dirty foroko (goatskin) that serves as its tabernacle, they will go under the sacred trees, and will strengthen their faith and harden their hearts (1). Henceforth

1. The initiates of powerful boli's sect make a sort of "renewal of vows" a year after their admission. Those of the Komo, who are given the name of timini deou, hold a festival to break all records; there is meat and gruel to spare, and the divine liqueur, d'lo, or millet beer, is plentiful.

they will be at home in every part of the Sudan; they need not fear

881 the poison that kills the inquisitive and the traitors, and wherever they
• 796 are asked the question, "Are you of the Komo?", they can give the
794 password, draw two crossed lines in the sand, and then, holding the thumb, the middle finger, and fourth finger in the hand, extend the forefinger and the little finger over this mark, saying to the questioner, "I am one of you."

I have noted here the verbal text of these questions and the answers to give them.

For the Komo

Q. E b'a la Wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Ne b'a la. I am.
Q. N'i b'a la, tjoko djira anna? If you are, show us the sign.
A. Ka'i ta Drahamé.

In saying these words bend the thumb, the middle finger, and the fourth finger while extending the forefinger and the little finger. /190/

II.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Tjoko djira anna wé? Show us the sign.
A. Da sigi da da la.

Place a container on the mouth of a container. While saying these words, place the feet one in front of the other, and immediately add: Djan kéné ouala djan djala. Make two parallel lines in the dust.

III.

Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Komo?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. E n'i so mâou benna mi ni? And where did you and your people meet?

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A. An benna dlaba da la, ou bi gouélé foura bosi. We met at the door of dlaba; they pick the leaves of the gouélé (false ebony) (1).

1. For the Nama.
Q. E b'a la wa? Are you of the Nama?
A. Né b'a la. I am.
Q. Féré tjon k'an.
Two straws are laid in a cross of
St. Andrew and shown to you.
A. Nin yé sira gné bo la yé. This is the road that guides, lights.
Q. A perpendicular straw is laid down.
A. Nin yé wara sé n-yé. Wara ti tama sén ko. This is the foot of a wild animal*.

* The boli are often given the epithet of wara, "wild animal," meaning "strong," "powerful."

A wild animal does not walk without legs.

Sirima-n-fign: this word is the family name, the diamou of Nama. End of the questions: Dja e b'a la kot! Dja (exclamation) you surely are /of the Nama/.

Through the whole night there are howls of wild animals, songs and lascivious dances, bellowings of trumpets freezing one with fear, and the nasal and piercing sounds of the pipes.

At dawn a warada, speaking into the horned tube, thanks those present in the name of the god Komo; a second repeats his words into a pipe, and a djélima (storyteller /griot/ of the Komo) repeats the words of the god in plainer terms to those present. And the /191/ crowd gives thanks, utters cries, makes its requests. Everyone retires exhausted, worn out, with his throat on fire and foam on his lips,

881 reeling on his legs -- in these festivals one must get drunk to please
796 the god.
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While all these things are happening outside, the women and little girls on the public square abandon themselves to their hearts' content. They perform none of the leaps and capers customary at ordinary festivals: shaking in their hands the goatskin bag or the white iron box full of little stones, they circle slowly, with short steps, around the orchestra, and only their buttocks move. These roll to the right and roll to the left, dip forward and quickly draw back -- a movement which is definitely not graceful. The excised girls spend the night sitting on mats covered with white cloths, between the legs of their mothers or serving women, and their heads, loosely thrown back, rest on the breasts whence they drew their life. They are wrapped in covers that have blue stripes on white background, only their heads showing, and one might say this was a display of new, shiny dolls with big black eyes, happy and all sparkling with joy. From time to time at the invitation of the dancers who sing of their grace and beauty, they shake their pierced gourds, make them rattle in their hands, and take part in the dance; then at dawn, in the morning, in a final round, they put their heels together and three times make three leaps in the air with their hands crossed on top of their heads.

And, if one believes the Negroes, this custom is not without meaning. The whitecloth on an excised girl's mat reminds the mother of one of the beautiful days of her life, the one when she gave herself to her husband in the bonds of marriage, and reminds the child hidden in her arms, wrapped in the cover like an infant in its cloths, that since she has now become a grown girl and has left childhood, she must guard her virginity. This large white cloth will testify for her on the day of her marriage as it testified for her mother, and it will be inexorable. The circle around the orchestra in short steps is the infant practicing its first steps; but now she has reached her full development, /192/ she can be sufficient to herself, and for that reason she makes these nine leaps with her hands crossed on top of her head.

881 As soon as the sabbath of the sons of the Komo is terminated
796 outside, the excised girls are led back to their huts with great pomp, with music in the lead, and the festival still goes on, for a Bambara

881 festival lasts as long as there is d'lo. After a few hours of sleep, before
•796 the noon meal, the excised girls come back, and around the well there is an endless babel punctuated by joyous laughter as they wash their loincloths, the cloths soiled by the dust of the night, and as they mend gourds, the dishes of this country. The pure Bambara girls, those who are not of the blacksmith caste nor of the "Marka" people of more or less mixed stock, have lost their grace and beauty and seem quite comical with their shaved heads. Just as at six to eight days
[302] after birth the head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri fetish, made motions over their heads and cut their hair, since the "hair of the womb" is not allowed to be seen in public, so at the da woro, six days after circumcision, they lose it again, since they cannot enter life with the hair of childhood; a dirty handkerchief replaces the locks of which they were so proud, they are without bead or jewel, and on their foreheads, in place of the multicolored crown,
[351] is the string with nine knots called the tafo, and it is fastened in back at the nape of the neck to the string called the djo, which is intended to protect them from sore throat, mumps, headache, and just about all illnesses.

4. The Festival of the Boloko Déou Don Bo, The Coming Out of the Circumcised and the Excised, The Real Entry into Civil and Religious Life

881 After the da woro, the festival of the sixth day, the circumcised
983 boys go back under the sacred tree outside the village, and the excised girls return to their huts. They take up again their life of "sweet idleness," and their little excursions in a group, at specified hours, to satisfy the wants of nature. They also have their days of big excursions. When the markets take place, they go to cut thorns at some 100 meters from the village. They bar the paths, set up /193/ a barricade, and ask every passer-by for a doua-mo, a share of the market. From habit, and especially from fear of the cuffings that are readily given out and of the spirits that watch over and protect the young people, everybody obeys and pays the toll. In addition to fish tails they also take in enough cowrie shells to buy a bit of meat and make themselves a treat.

766 When they have sewed and tied it well, they take it on their shoulders
794 and head on the double for the exit door. There they stop and without any respect roughly set the body down. Armed with picks they make an opening in the wall of the hut and, seizing the corpse by the feet, they drag it and put it into this opening. Strong hands seize it from the outside, they pull and the others push, and the excommunicated one comes out of his dwelling and appears in the alley or on the square. Four fellows -- sons of the fetish, for they alone are present at these [482] burials -- take him on their shoulders and, running, carry him to the cemetery. At the edge of the grave they put down their load, the initiates give a loud cry, a sort of roar, and they roll him with their feet into his final home. For such people there is not the slightest farewell or prayer, and the grave is filled at once.

In the evening the fetish is brought out, and the initiates abandon themselves to their sacred dances, while the god, in the hands of its [489] priests, /232/ runs about the village and its environs, exorcising. All night long nothing is heard but the bellowing of horns and trumpets and sacred hymns shouted by the crowd, and from a distance one would say they were dull rumblings or the actual cries of wild animals.

## 8. Worship accorded to the Dead

769 At the death of a Bambara not the slightest sacrifice is directed either to him or to the deceased of the family. However, the worship of the dead is prevalent among the Bambara, althought it cannot be compared to the worship of the genii, especially of the boli. Nevertheless, everyday one can see, at the door of one family or another, a large splash of blood on the wall about a meter from the ground, a brownish octopus one might say, throwing its twisted arms here and there and struggling against a clump of feathers stuck on its back with the juice of a chewed kola nut. Some people have seen in this worship the basis of the Negro religion and, no doubt because they did not know the language and have been unable to give an exact meaning to the words caught by their ears, they have portrayed the Bambara with knife always in hand, ready to slaughter in honor of his relatives. Because they group together all saraka and sacrifices,

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2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبَنَن sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبَنَن sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who,

3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two

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4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

4: Henry--269 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Festival of the N'tomo.
Flagellation of children.

Above: Festival of N'tomo.
Before the flagellation.

4: Henry--270 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Festival of the N'golo fetish: An outing of the to-n-de, of the association of the fla-n-to.

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Procession of the Tji wara: the young people meet at the field to work under the eyes of two companions dressed in the insignia of the fetish of work.

4: Henry--273 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

4: Henry--274 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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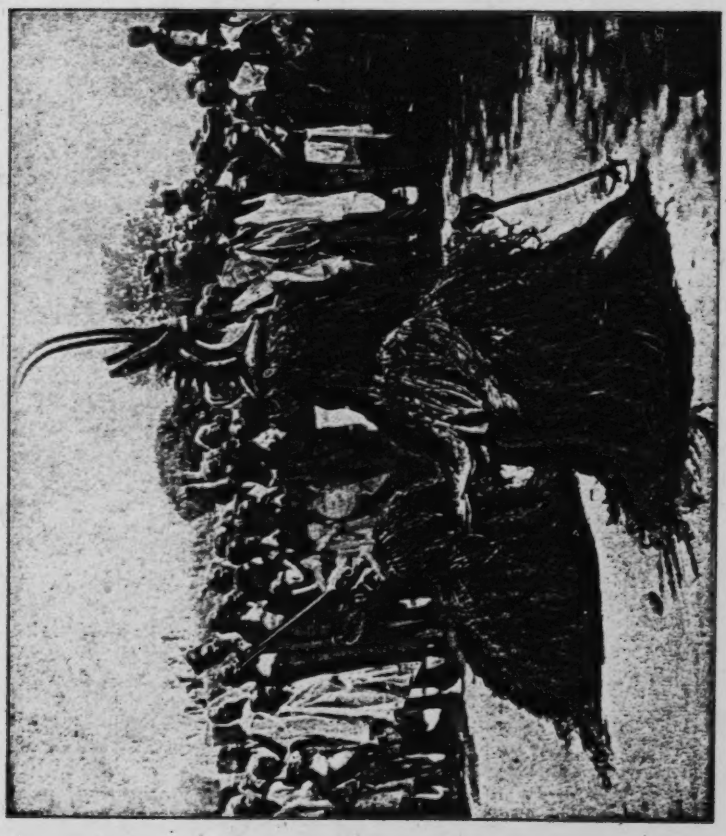

Sacred dance in honor of the Tji wara fetish, the genie of work.